

# **Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks Meeting**

February 16, 2006

Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center

Detroit, Michigan

## **MINUTES**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Murdock Jemerson, Chairperson

Hurley Coleman (until noon)

Robert Hoffmeyer

Kathy Lewand

Charles Nelson

Mary Pitcher

Dan Harrison (for Todd Scott)

Janet Howard Washington

Sam Washington

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Thomas Bailey

James Bradley

Betsy Clark

Tom Ferguson

Christopher Graham

James Hendricks

Michael McDonald

William Rose

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sandra Clark

Duncan Wyeth

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT**

Keith Charters

Curtis Hertel

Donna Stine

### **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF PRESENT**

Ron Olson

Vicki Anthes

George Cameron

Paul Curtis

Tony Herek

Harold Herta

Lowen Schuett

Sandy Simpson

Michael Drexler, Student Intern

**Chair Murdock Jemerson** called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and roll call taken of members present. **Chair Jemerson** thanked **Ms. Pat Vintevogel**, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and **Vicki Anthes** for arranging the meeting facility.

### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 7, 2005**

**Chair Jemerson** asked for motion to approve/adopt the December 7, 2005 CCMSP meeting minutes. Member **Mary Pitcher** motioned to adopt the minutes and motion seconded by member **Robert Hoffmeyer**. Minutes unanimously adopted as written.

**Mary Pitcher** referenced the Ionia Recreation Area Management Plan in December minutes and asked for clarification of the passage of Resolution 12-2005-04. The PRD staff explained the resolution passed by a vote of 10 to 3.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY**

**Chair Jemerson** shared an email received from a DNR employee as follows:

“I have worked for the State Parks as a seasonal employee in past years. I worked in the contact station, did interpreter work and anything else that needed to be done. Over the 8 years that I worked, there were many changes, some good, and some not so good. My suggestion has always been to add a fee to the license plates of Michigan for the Park system. You would get 100% of all registered vehicles to pay into the system and if you have a Michigan license plate, you are in the Park. No permits needed. This would save the cost of printing annual stickers and the only passes needed would be out of state. This would save money on printing and shipping of those stickers to the parks. Even if the fee was only \$5.00 per plate, that is more money than the \$24.00 for the few cars that do purchase annuals. This is just an idea that I have had for a long time and felt it needed to be looked at further.”

**Chair Jemerson** will identify the sender during the later part of the meeting.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Long-Term Finance Subcommittee – Chair Sam Washington** attended the January 12, 2006 Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Policy Committee on Finance and Administration held in Muskegon, Michigan. **Ron Olson** gave overview of the DNR optimal budget and Funding Challenges presented at the January NRC meeting by **Dennis Fedewa**, DNR Chief Deputy. The briefing justified PRDs request for a \$43M increase (\$37M is infrastructure related items). **Ron Olson** briefed the members on the budget information within meeting packets and explained the “talking points” for PRDs optimal budget; infrastructure, operational needs; linear trails, stewardship; equipment replacement, and technology. **Olson** discussed the financial difficulty of the Game and Fish Fund program and the DNR special committee formed to address this issue. The DNR Divisions need \$100M to increase the annual operating budget optimally. **Sam Washington** pointed out the optimal budget was a functional budget to address the DNRs needs.

The CCMSP Motor Vehicle Permit Resolution 12-2005-01 presented to the NRC was well received. The NRC Policy Committee adopted its own resolution for presentation to the Legislature and will share with the CCMSP members when available. Discussed the MVP legislation expiring on January 1, 2007, and upon renewal, changing the legislation to allow fees fixed with approval by the DNR Director, NRC, and CCMSP, similar to the camping fees resolution. **Ron Olson** will provide updates as appropriate. **Rodney Stokes**, DNR Legislative Liaison, continues to work with the legislature on these issues as well. The members discussed concern of term-limited legislators who support the state park system. Senator Birkholz was named as being a supportive legislator of the state park system and could be helpful.

**Interpretation and Education Subcommittee – Chair Kathy Lewand** stated a planned joint meeting with the Innovations and Marketing Subcommittee did not occur. A meeting date will be determined soon.

**Programming and Operations – Chair Betsy Clark** – No report. **George Cameron** stated information was provided to **Chair Clark** and the Subcommittee will provide a report at the next CCMSP committee meeting.

**Stewardship Subcommittee – Mary Pitcher** for **Chair McDonald** shared the Subcommittee met on February 2, 2006. **Mary Pitcher** briefed the committee on the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Resolution 02-2006-03, which urges the DNR to advocate \$3M in funding for state park acquisition with priority given to ecologically sensitive sites. Subcommittee is concerned with the lost opportunities to purchase parcels due to DNR policy on land purchases (pay vs. appraisals). The Subcommittee held extensive discussions about the need for a priority list of acquisition projects. **Chuck Nelson** asked for minor spelling edits to resolution.

**Mary Pitcher** motioned to adopt the Resolution 02-2006-03. Motion seconded by **Chuck Nelson**.

**Chair Emerson** asked for discussion on the motion. **Hurley Coleman** asked for clarification of the resolution regarding the \$3M dollars.

**Chuck Nelson** suggested adding language to allow a sizeable lump sum with flexibility to purchase a parcel as ... “a lump sum of \$3M for Michigan state park acquisition from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.” Priority would be given to ecologically sensitive sites. **Ron Olson** recommended adding language to the resolution to incorporate the land review process for funding dollars. **Chuck Nelson** suggested revising language by adding an amendment: “From the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund or other resources.” **Duncan Wyeth** asked for clarification on the time line for utilization of the \$3M. **Vicki Anthes** shared that the funding has a 3-year life and a lump sum specifically for acquisition only for state parks. It carries over in three years.

**Sam Washington** shared the funding could go into the stabilization fund and explained lump sum process from the Trust Fund to the DNR. **Sam Washington** also clarified that the Trust Fund is not the DNR trust fund, it is the peoples. The Committee discussed concerns regarding circumventing the trust fund board and the need to build in a mechanism built in the resolution for approaching the Trust Fund for purchases.

**Hurley Coleman** mirrored points made by **Sam Washington**. The resolution should address concerns of the Trust Fund Board and flexibility to be proactive with sensitive purchases and acquisitions as deemed appropriate. **Hurley Coleman** shared concerns of local parks and recreation systems competing for funding and holding \$3M aside for future spending. Suggested adding language to provide the DNR with more flexibility with the Trust Fund Board as follows, "whereas, the Michigan state parks need flexibility to capitalize on acquisition opportunities when they arise." **Mary Pitcher** shared the Stewardship Subcommittee would be acceptable to this statement. Further discussion occurred regarding concerns of losing critical opportunities and the approaches to meet the Trust Funds approval. **Sam Washington** stated the Trust Fund would not support a \$3M fund to allow the DNR to decide how to spend the dollars, but has confidence for the DNR to buy and sell land with proceeds from sales to purchase more land. Additionally, **Sam Washington** suggested a system to allow for emergency acquisitions and a process for consideration of emergency application to be approved unanimously by the CCMSP or the NRC. Specifically, **Sam** noted the case of the timely acquisition a huge tract of land in the Upper Peninsula from the Forestland Group with Nature Conservancy providing the role of an emergency funding source [story at: <http://nature.org/pressroom/press/press1728.html>].

**Chair Jemerson** asked for clarification on the motion to adopt the resolution. **Chuck Nelson** withdrew his motion to allow more discussion with attending Stewardship Subcommittee members during lunch. **Mary Pitcher** moved to table until afternoon session. Tabling decision was approved unanimously.

**Ron Olson** updated committee on the Brighton parcels in Genoa Township.

The Stewardship Subcommittee presented Resolution No. 02-2006-04 for prescribed burning. Prescribed burning is not occurring as often as necessary to ensure proper resource management, within the PRD and throughout all DNR divisions. This resolution urges the DNR to explore all possible means of increasing prescribed fires to state forests, game areas, and parks and recreation areas.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 02-2006-04 made by **Mary Pitcher**. Supported by **Chuck Nelson**. No further discussion. Resolution No. 02-2006-04 unanimously approved.

The CCMPS Stewardship Subcommittee requested further discussion its role in reviewing management plans and referenced Resolution 12-2005-04 from the December 7, 2004 minutes, page 7.

Member **Tom Bailey** moved that future management plans are delegated to the appropriate CCMSP subcommittee for review recommendation to the CCMSP of the whole. Motion supported and approved.

Member **Chuck Nelson** suggested utilizing the Stewardship Subcommittee as CCMSP representatives for individual site, localized issues. **Vicki Anthes** referred to the memorandum to dated February 8, 2006, to assist with clarifying the Subcommittee's involvement and recommendation for management plans. Also, the PRD staff to attend the Stewardship Subcommittee meetings and provide updates on all management planning activities, including scheduled public meetings. The Subcommittee will report management planning information to the CCMSP of the whole for discussion. This process will keep the CCMSP members knowledgeable

for potential future involvement. The CCMSP concurred that no further action is required on Resolution 12-2005-04.

**Fee Subcommittee – Chair Chuck Nelson** stated the fee increases are in place and citizens continue to visit the state parks and recreation areas. The story told through the marketing effort had an impact. Responses to the PRD's comments cards from visitors revealed many were unaware that the parks and recreation system does not receive general funding. As of February 12, 2006, camping night numbers were flat, but reservations are up 4 percent from 2005. Reservations being taken into August 2006 and indicate the numbers are on track.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION'S FY 2006 BUDGET**

**Ron Olson** briefed the CCMSP members on the Governor's proposed FY 2007 budget and shared two key items that affect the PRD. First item, the \$20M bond proposal tied to the jobs creation program to stimulate the economy. The bond debt would be identified in the general funds and will keep members updated as it progresses. The second item, Michigan Conservation Civilian Corps (MCCC) proposal that will remove \$5M from the \$20M corpus and provided to five different universities (\$1M/university). This program will provide similar services done by the PRD. The program will lose \$225,000/annually. The DNR will have input on projects the universities perform in state parks or recreation areas. The members discussed parks and recreation curriculum's all ready in place at several universities. Discussion continued relative to job impacts, completion of projects, and leveraging funds against other state work force programs. **Ron Olson** to keep members updated when more information is available and referenced the schedule of legislative budget hearings within the members meeting materials.

**Hurley Coleman** discussed concerns of the impact the MCCC proposal will have on jobs taken out of the system and the universities perspective. **George Cameron** shared MCCC is a project-orientated program with the expectation of work skill training. The PRD is reviewing how it will manage projects with less funding. Presently, the PRD is quantifying projects and the potential impacts in 2007. The PRD may utilize student interns for at various work levels. An example, interpretive services provided by interns for college class credit. **Hurley Coleman** asked for record to reflect that consideration in the future to check on how the MCCC proposal is working and the impact to the local community relationship with state parks. The PRD is reviewing the entire MCCC program to achieving the objectives from the original program.

**Chuck Nelson** shared some universities do not have accredited parks and recreation programs. The two largest parks and recreation programs are Central Michigan University and MSU. The mandatory internship is the accredited program provides a positive vehicle as part of its requirements.

The CCMSP members discussed the MCCC proposal and sending a message to support higher priority is given to universities to have accredited parks and recreation programs. **Ron Olson** suggested the members could informally recommend criteria for selection of universities that have certified parks and recreation programs. **Sandra Clark** asked if universities need to apply.

**Sam Washington** shared that the DNR will have substantial input with how the funding is dispersed by the universities, with emphasis on parks.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Resolutions**

**Ron Olson** and **Harold Herta** gave an overview of the motor vehicle permits and boating access sites (BAS) resolutions. These resolutions add sites to locations in the PRD system not requiring permits and were developed to be fair and appropriate for all PRD users. The expanded number of locations will also generate revenue and has not been revised since 1987. Not all sites are staffed and would implement a mechanism for self-registration. The PRD is working to gain better control of its sites and enforcement issue of citizens who do not pay at the gates. **Chuck Nelson** shared that FMFM performed a study on iron rangers and have good data on compliance rates. **George Cameron** clarified if boating attendant is not at the location where citizens arrive, the visitor is not required to pay, but is required to pay in the parks and recreation areas.

**Mary Pitcher** motioned to adopt Motor Vehicle Permits Resolution No. 02-2006-01. **Sandra Clark** supported. Resolution unanimously adopted.

Members discussed the BAS resolution, low maintenance issues, and usage by non-motorized watercraft usage. Also, being used as staging areas for canoe liveries. The Waterways Commission is seeking an amendment to legislation requiring non-motorized kayak and canoes are registered. **Chuck Nelson** suggested a registration system similar to an off road vehicle (ORV). **Harold Herta** stated the list only adds nine sites to the existing list, only addressing 10 percent of the total BAS. This is an incremental step toward the goal to make parity and equality for all visitors.

**Hurley Coleman** moved to adopt the BAS Resolution No. 02-2006-02. Supported by **Kathy Lewand**. Resolution unanimously adopted.

The PRD staff will provide updates on the resolutions and review data to develop a broader-based proposal for assignment to the Fees Subcommittee.

### **Legislative Updates**

**Ron Olson** shared Senate Bill 971 (Senator Cameron Brown – primary sponsor) and Senate Bill 972 (Senator Patty Birkholz – primary sponsor), created as a mechanism to allow for extra steps be taken before a state park/recreation area could be sold. Senate Bill 971 requires three-fourths of the CCMSP recommend approval of the sale of the land then to the DNR Director. New language added will require the legislature to approve the sale as well. Senate Bill 972, similar to 971. Both bills prohibit the sale of state park land without approval of the legislature. This legislation was prompted due to the article written by former Department of Environmental Quality Director, Russ Harding, which appeared in newspapers around the state. **Rodney Stokes, DNR Legislative Liaison**, working with the legislature on elements of compromise. Initially, the DNR opposed this legislation due to concerns of legislative authority over the state parks and recreation system. Updates will occur as the legislation evolves.

Members inquired if the Brighton land being sold was state park land and were informed technically "yes", but the area falls outside the dedicated boundary of the Brighton Recreation area (as defined in the land review process). Land which fell outside that boundary went into the Phase II review. The DNR could make an argument relative to Brighton. Members discussed the requirement of the legislative language and definition of land boundary for approval by the legislature. **Sam Washington** shared it may become less of an issue after the passage of Proposition 1.

**Chair Jemerson** asked if the CCMSP should go on record if this legislation should be supported. Members agreed to further research and discuss at the next meeting, if applicable. The PRD is unsure when these Senate bills will be presented for a vote.

**Chair Jemerson** returned to Resolution 02-2006-03. **Mary Pitcher** stated the Stewardship Committee desires to table the resolution until the next meeting.

### **PRD Challenges**

**Ron Olson** shared the three categories for the PRD Challenges to the field to become more efficient and control instead of waiting on funding. These are the Energy Conservation Challenge, discover methods for saving on energy/electricity, with energy savings realized within five years; Targets of Opportunity, mechanisms to invest in ideas involving special events; the \$1 Million Challenge for every park/recreation area to raise over \$1 million in Fiscal Year 2006 from innovative programs that will generate new revenue, partnerships, sponsorships, and/or create efficiencies to avoid costs.

**Mike Drexler**, student intern from Central Michigan University gave input from the field on the plans and shared, at this point in time, the he received 62 energy proposals, 60 targets of opportunities 60 proposals; and 8 for the \$1M challenge. **Kathy Lewand** congratulated Ron and his staff on a job well done. Excellent program.

**Duncan Wyeth** suggested a partnership with the energy conservation model. **Chuck Nelson** shared stated GM is pursuing e-85 vehicles. **Ron Olson** shared the PRD setting the example for energy savings via golf carts, bicycles, instead of automobiles/trucks, using bio-diesel fuel, etc. The GM hydrosol vehicle at Tri-Centennial was also mentioned. **Sandra Clark** shared Ford Motor Company gives NSP buses and check into the companies willingness to authorize a green vehicle for uses in green locations. **Duncan Wyethe** noted this information for the Marketing Innovations Team.

### **Coldwater Lake State Park Memo**

**Ron Olson** reiterated the discussion held at the December 7, 2005 CCMSP on Coldwater Lake State Park. **Harold Herta** made contact with Branch County officials and allowing the lease to run for a year and review again (a year by year partnership). **Hurley Coleman** asked the minutes to reflect his comments, "This is the best way to look at excess property and local engagement. This could help retain park inventory, overall, but transfer management and development to local units." Discussion continued with updates provided by **Harold Herta**.

### **Idlewild**

**Chair Jemerson** shared the information on Idlewild, Michigan and its long cultural history of recreation, entertainment, and following from African-Americans. **Chair Jemerson** stated he visited Idlewild and attended the jazz festival during 2005. Idlewild is rich in culture, but lacking resources. This is an opportunity for the PRD to bring history forward and work with the local community at Idlewild. **Ron Olson** and **Chair Jemerson** have discussed Idlewild with the DNR Director as well. **Sandra Clark** shared that History, Arts, and Libraries is working with Everett Fly utilizing his expertise with developing of black community heritage. Idlewild is an opportunity for a different type of state park and is an incredible natural resource. Discussion continued with methods for working with the Idlewild community. Members agreed this project is a great opportunity to work with friends groups and seek grant funding. Dr. Thomas Coon, Director of the MSU Extension and Dr. Don Holceck, Director of the MSU Travel Tourism and Recreation Center are resources to contact as well. Another option to review, location of tax reverted parcels for possible recreation. Need core group to work with community on this topic; a common public area that can radiate out funds. Search for non-profit entities, partnerships, friends group.

**Janet Howard Washington** shared her youth experiences visiting Idlewild. The original streets are named after people. Church in the Chicago area owns 123 acres. There is a huge annual Idlewild gathering held St. Louis, MO as well. **Chair Jemerson** referenced the book "Black Eden the Idlewild Community" by Lewis Walker and Ben Wilson. **Chair Jemerson** for the record read a statement from Hurley Colman on Idlewild as follows: "I wholeheartedly endorse this effort. A further review of cultural histories in state parks could be an incredible help in promoting diversity."

**Sandra Clark** will keep the CCMSP members updated on Mr. Fly's work. **Sandra** stated the importance of contacting Congressman to help too. **Chair Jemerson** asked the Interpretation and Education Subcommittee to prepare a resolution in support of the Idlewild project. **Sam Washington** stated that the Trust Fund would be supportive of this effort as well.

**Chair Jemerson** introduced Faye Nelson, Executive Director of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and Pat Vintevogal and thanked them for the room and hospitality.

### **DNR State Worker Diversity Program**

**Ron Olson** discussed the pilot diversity program to stimulate the hiring and diversification of the PRDs work force. The PRD is the lead on this two county pilot, Oakland and Muskegon Counties, and eventually promoted statewide. **Ron Olson** will provide updates on the progress and success of this important project.

### **Big Rock Point**

Big Rock Point is a nuclear power plant on Lake Michigan being deaccessioned and potential for consideration as another state park. The Big Rock Point property is 1.5 miles of shoreline on Lake Michigan. Discussions are occurring in the DNR on appraisal data. The members discussed other areas issues incurred after the sale of similar types of property and cautioned the purchase. **Ron Olson** will keep the members posted on updates.



## **Project GO**

**Ron Olson** shared the list of events for the February Project GO events. Next planned events are in June and will have new events to encourage people to get outdoors.

## **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)**

**George Cameron** provided updates on the EAB issue and work continues with the Department of Agriculture. Discussed the map of areas where EAB is identified and the exponentially growth of the area. The PRD still has no funding to remove the infected trees. Department of Agriculture is taking care of everything at Warren Dunes other than the stumps. Still a number of trees in southeast Michigan. A free disposal site in Whitmore Lake, but trucking materials costs \$8,700. The PRD staff at Young State Park developed an external burner for the target of opportunities challenge. Burn the wood rather than haul it. **George Cameron** stated the payback on burners is two to three years. Thoughts were to seek out friends groups to assist with purchase of burners for parks heating sources. Discussed concern that 90+ percent of trees at Lakeport State Park are Ash. Ray Fahlsing is working with the Department of Corrections on the prison grow program for tree replacements; large trees, 15' by 3" in diameter to ensure the trees survive the elements. **Kathy Lewand** suggested a project go event to have friends group do tree planting. The PRD staff will provide updates as applicable.

## **Next Meeting Date**

**Thursday, April 27**

**Bay City State Park/or Bay City area**

**Janet Howard Washington** invited the CCMPS members to attend the Michigan Horse Council's 3-day meeting at MSU and provided a flier. Complimentary tickets can be obtained by contacting Janet's Office. Complimentary tickets will also be available at the Expo under name of CCMSP. The international draft horse show is planned in October 2006 at MSU. **Sam Washington** shared 2006 Outdoorama to be held at the new Rock Financial Showplace and members contact his office for complimentary tickets as well.

Motion to adjourn by **Chuck Nelson**. Supported by **Kathy Lewand**.

Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.